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Showing Utah 4-H Dressage

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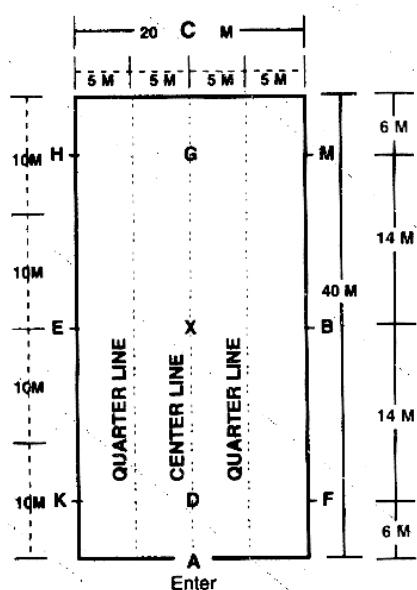
Introduction

Dressage is a French term which means “training.” It teaches understanding between horse and rider and develops the horse’s physical and mental condition, improving the horse’s natural gaits. The rider shows individually in a specific dressage arena. Dressage events usually follow the United State Equestrian Federation (USEF) or United States Combined Training Association (USCTA) rules. 4-H youth can review these rules at their respective Web sites.

There are two legal arena sizes for dressage events. 4-H uses the small arena, which is 40 meters (132 feet) long and 20 meters (66 feet) wide.

For more details on arena set up and design, consult the USEF or USCTA Web sites. At specific locations around the arena, letters indicate where riders will perform movements. See Figure 1.

Figure 1



Scoring System

Each exhibitor must enter the arena within 90 seconds of a signal (bell or whistle) or they are disqualified from competition. After the signal, exhibitors usually circle the outer perimeter of the arena and then enter at “A.”



Horses should appear responsive and willing to rider cues. Collection with contact on the bit is necessary. The horse should be forward in its gaits and supple through its mouth and body. The rider should appear to be using a minimal amount of effort to achieve the desired response from the horse. Strong, steady seat and legs are required with soft, quiet hands that maintain steady contact with the horse's mouth. The big picture of horse and rider should appear as if they are performing a dance in sync with each other.

Riders know before the contest which test they will perform and, therefore, should practice the test well before the competition. The USEF, USCTA, and USEA (United States Eventing Association) publish dressage tests with updates every 4 years.

Scoring

Each movement in the test is scored from 0-10. 0 indicates the movement was not performed. 10 indicate that the movement was excellent and is extremely difficult to obtain. 5 is considered sufficient. An overall score of 50% or better must be obtained to be considered an adequate test score. An exhibitor should be pleased with a score over 60% as scores over 70% are unusual. The scale is as follows:

10 Excellent;	6 Satisfactory;	2 Bad;
9 Very Good;	5 Sufficient	1 Very bad;
8 Good;	4 Insufficient;	0 Not performed
7 Fairly Good;	3 Fairly Bad;	

Errors during the test include off course, missing part of a movement and use of voice. Penalties are assessed for errors in the following manner:

-2 for first error

-4 for second error

Disqualification for third error.

At the end of the score sheet, collective marks (scores) are recorded for the overall picture of the performance. Each collective mark may have a co-efficient of 2 or more, which means it is multiplied by the appropriate coefficient. The marks received in the collective marks will be close to the marks received in the test. That is, the exhibitor cannot receive a 7 collective mark under rider position if the whole test consists of 4's and 5's. The exhibitor's seat and aids should only result in average marks of 7 if they are correct enough to receive a 7 in the test. There is also space allotted for the judge to write remarks. To determine the score, points are totaled and then a percent is figured to give a final score in both points and percentage.

(Example score sheet)

	TEST	DIRECTIVE IDEAS	POINTS	↓	TOTAL	REMARKS
1 A X	Enter working trot Halt, Salute Proceed working trot	Straightness on centerline, transitions, quality of halt and trot				
2 C B	Track right Circle right 20m	Quality of turn at C, quality of trot, roundness of circle				
3 KXM	Change rein working trot	Quality of trot, straightness				
4 Between C & H	Working canter left lead	Calmness and smoothness of depart, quality of canter				

Attire

Proper Attire Is Required! For all exhibitors, a blouse with a rat-catcher collar, hunter jacket and American Standards for Testing Materials (ASTM) approved helmet are required. Typically older exhibitors are required to wear breeches and tall boots (see Figure 2) while younger riders may wear jodhpurs and paddock boots with garters (see Figure 3). Hair should be tied back and secured in a bun or inside of the helmet.

Spurs

Any English type spur that does not cause harm to the horse is allowed (see Figure 4). For more information on proper attire refer to the Utah 4-H rule book.



Figure 2



Figure 3



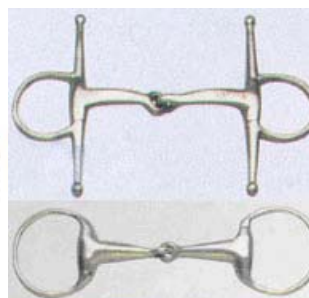
Figure 4

Tack

Legal bits include the Kimberwick and simple snaffles, such as the full cheek or eggbutt.



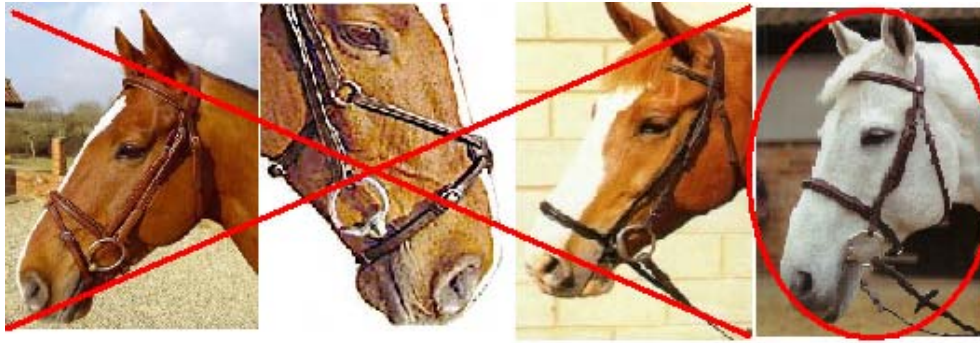
Kimberwick



Eggbutt

Full Cheek

All horses are expected to be shown in a plain cavasson. All other types of nosebands (Figure eight, flash, dropped, etc.) are considered illegal.



No martingales, boots or leg wraps are permitted.

Any English type saddle is permitted; however, a dressage style saddle will help improve performance. See Figure 5.

Figure 5



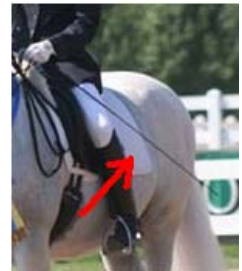
Dressage Saddle



Hunt Seat Saddle

Crops and Bats

Any whip may be carried as long as it does not exceed 4 feet in length (including lash). If the class is part of a combined training event, no whip is to be carried.



In Summary

Dressage is an event in which allows the rider to exhibit complete control over the horse's every movement. The rider should ride with a soft body and hand in motion with the horse. The horse should exhibit complete compliance to the rider with a supple body and soft mouth. This event allows 4-H youth to develop a strong relationship with their horse while developing excellent horsemanship skills.

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